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SUBJECT: SPECIAL MEDIA REACTION: VISIT OF UNDER SECRETARY BURNS TO
UAE

¶1. Summary: Print and electronic media gave extensive coverage to the visit of Under Secretary Nicolas Burns to the UAE January 22-23. ¶2007. The Arabic and English print media prominently carried photos and news agency story of Ambassador Burns meeting with Mohammed Bin Rashid (1/23) and Mohammed Bin Zayed (1/22). Media also carried lengthy excerpts of U/S Burns' remarks during a press conference at the Gulf Research Center, Dubai. In addition to the press conference, Ambassador Burns also conducted four TV interviews. End summary.

¶2. Electronic media coverage of U/S Nicolas Burns in UAE, Regional and International Media outlets included:

Dubai-based Radio Sawa carried lengthy excerpts of U/S Burns' press remarks. Excerpts centered mainly on the Under Secretary's focus on Iran's nuclear program, Lebanon and the new strategy in Iraq. Radio Sawa started using the remarks at 3:00 p.m. twice an hour till 8:00 p.m.

Dubai Television carried U/S Burns' interview during the main evening newscast at 10:00 p.m. This included excerpts on Lebanon, Iraq, and the Iranian nuclear program and the dangers it poses to regional and international stability. Newscast re-broadcasted at 01:00 a.m.

Al-Arabiya started using excerpts of the Under Secretary's remarks in their newscasts and news summaries as of the 8:00 p.m. news bulletin on January 23, running through afternoon Jan. 24. Excerpts covered wide range of issues ranging from Iraq, Iran, Middle East peace and Lebanon. The full 20-minute interview will be carried in its entirety on January 25.

CNN carried the entire transcript of their interview on their Arabic website "cnnarabic.com" and carried it also on the CNN wire.

BBC World advised that the interview will be carried in their Business Asia program on Saturday, January 27.

¶3. Arabic and English print media prominently covered Ambassador Burns' meeting with Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid on 23/1 and Muhammad Bin Zayed, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi 1/22, and excerpts of remarks made by Ambassador Burns during a press conference in Dubai.

-- Under headline "Burns: "No US intention for a military

confrontation with Iran"; He stressed US military forces will stay in Iraq and called for normalization with Israel", "Al-Ittihad" (circulation 65,000), Abu Dhabi-based Arabic semi-official daily, ran 1/24 coverage excerpts of Ambassador Burns from Dubai press conference:

"Political Affairs Nicholas Burns asserted that his country did not have an intention to engage in a military confrontation with Iran, but rather intended to hold onto diplomacy to resolve the nuclear crisis, despite the security challenges posed by Iran to the countries of the region. He called on the other Arab states to adhere to the option of peace in the Middle East and take serious steps towards normalization of relations with Israel for the sake of stability in the region. He also confirmed that his country took the difficult choice in Iraq by insisting on committing itself to its responsibilities to the Iraqi government... He said: "We are aware that the region is very sensitive and complicated and that the solution to their problems needs patience, patience and hard work"... He pointed out that the United States does not dictate conditions but rather comes to consult and listen to their partners and friends. On the Iranian nuclear danger: "The leaders of the region asked us to search for peaceful ways to resolve the international crisis with Iran, and this is what we have done when we shifted the issue to the Security Council. If we had wanted a military option, we would not have resorted to the Security Council"... On the role that the United States anticipates from the United Arab Emirates in the Iranian case, Burns praised the depth of friendship and cooperation that has characterized US-UAE relations, and stressed that the wisdom of the late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan still guides the wisdom of the US leaders in dealing with the issues of the region. He expressed his admiration for the bright economic and social progress witnessed in the country, which brings it up to the level of the most prosperous countries in the world.

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He confirmed once again the United States' support for the security of Israel and urged the Arab countries to take serious steps towards normalization. He added "Israel wants to live in peace. It is a true US partner and must also be a partner with Arabs".

-- Under headline "Burns: 'American policy challenges: Iraq, Lebanon, Iran and the security of Israel'", "Al-Khaleej" (circulation 90,000), Sharjah-based pan-Arab daily, ran 1/24 coverage of excerpts of Ambassador Burns from Dubai press conference:

"Israel is a reality, the preservation of its security is an U.S. absolute commitment, and the Arabs must understand, and absorb the fact that America is the only country that has the capacity to deal with "Israel" and the Arab countries. This was the message stressed by the third ranking official in the State Department Nicholas Burns, the Under-Secretary of State, at a press conference held yesterday in the Gulf Research Center in Dubai. Burns began his speech by paying tribute to the wisdom of Sheikh Zayd bin Sultan Al Nahyan, and the wise leadership of the United Arab Emirates, which has witnessed amazing structural, economic and cultural development, and he said that generations of Americans have benefited from the wise leadership of the UAE as there are over 700 American companies operating in the UAE. Burns explained that the vision of the American administration towards the challenges faced by the United States in the Middle East stems from these basic points: First is the security of the Gulf states, and the second is maintaining the security of "Israel". Thus, American foreign policy seeks to strengthen ties with the Gulf States, and to establish security partnerships with the coordination of a group of regional countries that want peace, security and stability, such as Egypt and Jordan. He said: "There are four challenges for the American administration in the Middle East, including: The first is in Iraq: The United States and its allies should assist the Iraqi government to overcome the horror of war and sectarian strife. This task can not be abandoned by the American administration; it should assist the Iraqis to regain the basic elements of security. This task requires the contribution of Arab countries, the European Union and Iraq's neighbors, especially Iran and Syria. It is not reasonable for the US to abandon this task because the consequences of this would be

disastrous, and the price will be high. The second challenge is in Lebanon: The American administration believes that it has to support Siniora's government against those who demonstrate against it in the streets in order to topple it by turning against democracy. We must make efforts to prevent the Lebanese people from living a new war, like the harsh war they suffered during summer 2006. Burns said he did not believe that the Siniora government will fall. The third challenge is the security of "Israel": Israel's security and the establishment of a Palestinian state are complicated issues; the American administration is committed to Israel's security and the Arabs must help the US administration to achieve peace, and this is what the Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice has stressed in recent times. We would like to see a democratic Palestinian government. I was in "Israel", and met with officials, including the Palestinians, Mahmoud Abbas. I also met with Ehud Olmert, and it was clear to me that the "Israelis" want peace, but they need international and regional support that would remove their security concerns and fears. Syria and Iran should stop supporting radical groups, and should promote negotiations to reach a solution on this complex problem. If moderation did not happen, the consequences will be as is the case in Iraq. The fourth challenge is Iran: Iran has potential human and economic capabilities and large oil wealth, but radicalism made Tehran a "central bank for terrorism" in the Middle East. The policy of exporting extremism is not in the interest of the Gulf region, and Iran should understand that by this policy, it further isolates itself. Since 1979, we have not negotiated with Iran, but we are working with China, Russia and the European Union to persuade Iran to halt its nuclear activity. Secretary Rice said in Kuwait that the American administration is willing to sit down with the Iranians and discuss uranium enrichment, and she offered the United States' support to assist Iran to build a reactor to produce peaceful nuclear energy. He added that for the last four and a half months, Iran has been rejecting all efforts to solve this problem, ignoring appeals from El Baradei, Russia, China and many other countries. Finally, the Security Council imposed economic sanctions on Iran,

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which can not withstand the existing isolation like North Korea. The Arabs want the United States to find a way to deal with Iran's nuclear issue, and the Gulf States do not want to see Iran become a dominating force. Burns said Washington has no interest in a military confrontation with Tehran, but Iran must understand that the US has its interests, the Gulf States have their interests, and European countries also have their interests. This is why the United States sent two aircraft carriers and reinforced its military capabilities in the region. Iran financed Hezbollah, Hamas, and the Islamic Jihad and it seeks to ignite unrest and violence, but it must understand that America would protect and defend its interests in this vital part of the world.

-- Under headline "Assistant Secretary of State stresses preventing Iranian nuclear power; Burns: "The United States will not intervene militarily in Lebanon in support of the government", "Al-Bayan" (circulation 85,000), Dubai-based Arabic daily, ran 1/24 excerpts from Dubai press conference:

"Nicholas Burns, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, ruled out the possibility of the United States intervening militarily in Lebanon to save the government of Fouad Siniora in the event of its collapse under the escalating pressure of the opposition. He said that Washington supports Siniora's government, and encourages the Lebanese to work together for the reform of Lebanon's economic situation and the rebuilding of the nation and society. He asserted that the United States is determined to prevent Iran's acquisition of nuclear weapons. He also said that Washington was not willing to enter into a military confrontation with Iran, but it will not allow Tehran to possess nuclear weapons that would threaten the security and stability of the region, and kept the door open to an unconditional negotiation between Iran and the international community. He stressed the seriousness of the Iranian quest to possess nuclear technology as this would give Iran the possession of nuclear deterrence, and hence would pose a threat to the Gulf States. On the issue of Iraq, Burns pointed out that the cessation of the conflict and the sectarian fighting between

Sunnis and Shiites in Iraq is the top priority of the American administration in the current period, in addition to government support for the strengthening of security and the imposition of state control, and the dismantling of the Shiite militia which ignites the flames of sedition and threaten the unity of Iraq. On the Palestinian issue, Burns said that President George W. Bush is the first American president to undertake the establishment of an independent Palestinian state, and put ensuring peace and solving the Arab-Israeli conflict at the forefront of political priorities, despite the fact that this promise is not easy or feasible, but needs sincere efforts from all parties."

14. There were no editorials or comments on Under-Secretary Burns' remarks in any of the UAE media.

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